

30th Anniversary Issue



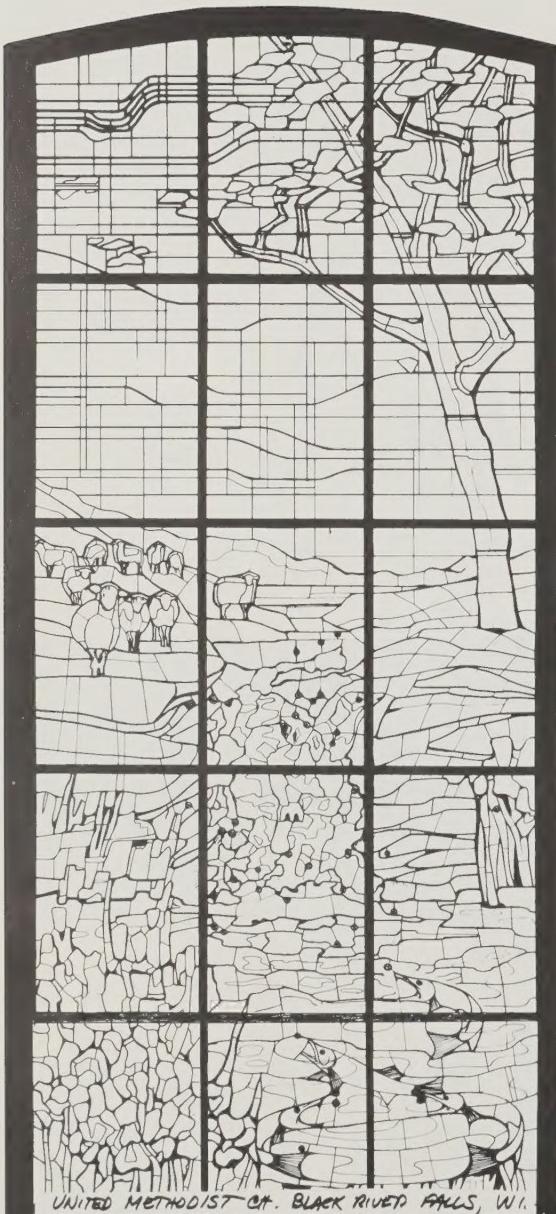
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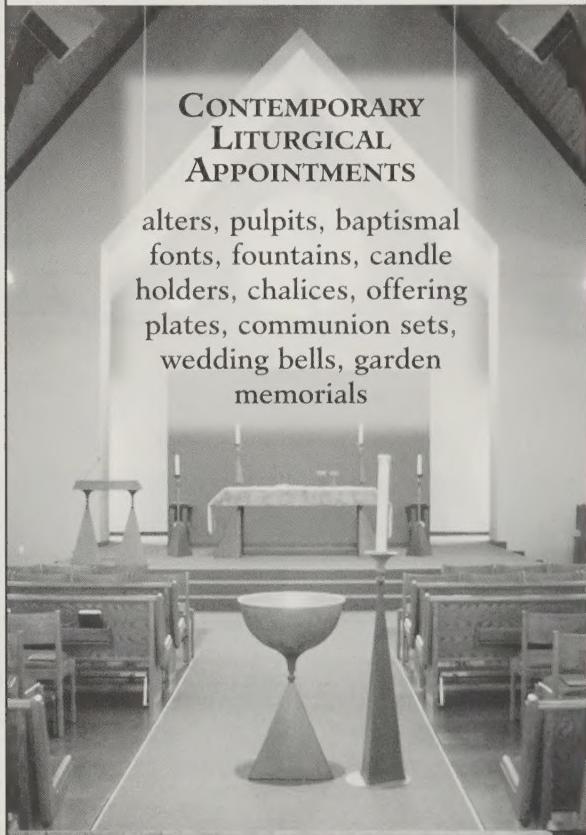
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30th Anniversary Issue

**REMEMBRANCE OF THE PAST
FAITH IN THE FUTURE**

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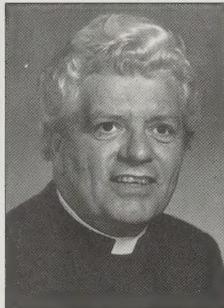
This recently completed Chapel of St. Ignatius on the Seattle University campus was designed by Steven Holl Architects, New York, N.Y., and Olson Sundberg of Seattle. It has been featured in several architectural magazines with much acclaim and will be one of the projects visited in IFRAA's Conference Tour on October 18. Photo © Solange Fabiao.



1 Rolland H. Sheafor (dec.)



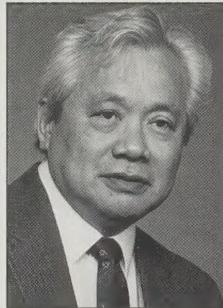
2 John C. Pecsok, FAIA



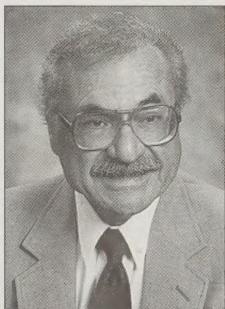
3 Rev. Sherrill Scales, Jr.



4 Harold R. Watkins



5 Henry Jung, AIA



6 Eugene Potente, Jr.

THE PAST PRESIDENTS' CLUB

At a recent IFRAA Board of Directors meeting it was agreed to give special recognition to the hard work of IFRAA's past presidents. An action was taken to create the Past Presidents' Club, which will provide complimentary mailings of IFRAA activities and *Faith & Form* to all our past presidents.



7 Michael F. LeMay, AIA



8 John R. Potts

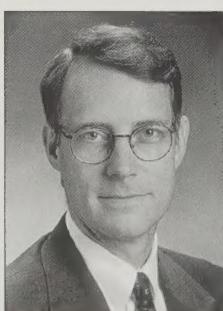
While we mourned the passing of our first president, Rolland Sheafor, in December 1996, we take this opportunity to thank all for their contributions to our organization. Those wishing to contact other past presidents are encouraged to obtain their current mailing address from Betty Meyer, *Faith & Form* Editor



9 Bishop Russell W. Pearson



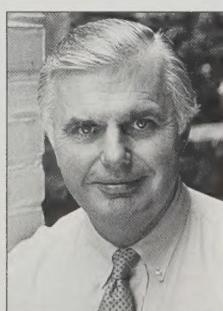
10 Lawrence D. Cook, AIA



11 David K. Cooper, AIA



12 Rev. Albert Fisher



13 Richard Bergmann, FAIA

Notes & Comments

Celebrating 30 Years

In 1967, the Guild for Religious Architecture (GRA) embarked on an ambitious venture to launch a new magazine devoted to the religious arts and architecture. *Faith & Form* was born. Quoting from the title page of Volume 1, "Faith & Form represents a further effort to provide increased understanding and heightened awareness of the potential of good design in religious art and architecture."

After the favorable reception to this premiere issue, *Faith & Form* was briefly produced as a quarterly magazine and distributed free to all AIA architects. The enormous time, energy and expense, however, soon tempered this arrangement, and *Faith & Form* settled in as a successful, subscription based, biannual journal. Each fall, *Faith & Form* featured GRA Conference proceedings and in the spring offered an array of insightful articles on religion, art and architecture.

In 1977, *Faith & Form* documented the historic merger of three like-minded organizations (the American Society for Church Architecture, the Commission on Church Planning and Architecture, and the Guild for Religious Architecture) into a single entity, soon to be known as the Interfaith Forum on Religion, Art and Architecture (IFRAA).

Publishing continuously since 1967, although at times sporadically, *Faith & Form* celebrates its 30th anniversary with this issue. We invited a founding member of the magazine and author of "What is Religious Architecture?", an incisive article that appeared in our first issue, to reassess the state of religious architecture as he understands it today. We are pleased to present Edward Sovik's response with "Remembrance and Hope." Offering an alternative point of view, IFRAA Chair Douglas Hoffman has contributed "Seeking the Sacred." We hope these articles will spark reader response and encourage you to voice your opinion to the editor.

At 30, we feel young, even as we survey the field of failed architectural magazines such as *Progressive Architecture* and *AIA Journal*. Nevertheless, we need your continuous support through subscriptions, reader responses, contributed articles, directory listings and advertisements. We look forward to the years ahead and hope you will remain faithful *Faith & Form* readers into the new millennium.

An Open Invitation

What atmospheric qualities of the worship environment most influence our sense of the sacred, yet are seldom addressed in religious art and architecture conferences? Light and acoustics—the focus of IFRAA's Seattle Tour, October 17-18. Join us as we learn how artists, architects and designers have responded to the challenge posed by Seattle's unique climate, maximizing daylight and employing darkness to their advantage.

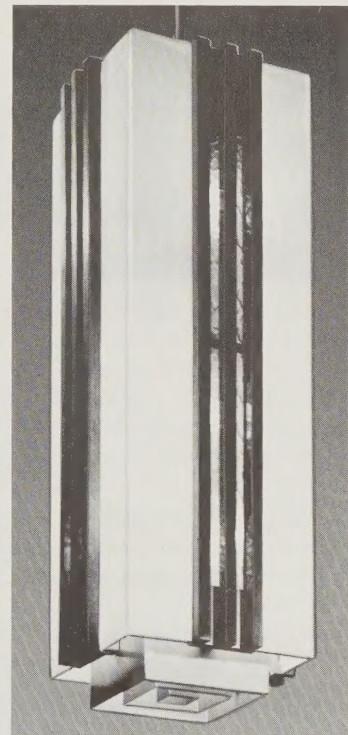
The tour begins at historic St. Spiridon Cathedral with a formal lighting of the candles, the primary source of illumination other than the small oculus in the dome of this Orthodox Church of America. Musicians will provide chants to illustrate the acoustical properties of the cathedral, and the pastor will comment on the church's minimal use of electric lighting in this traditional house for worship.

In contrast to the mystery of the darkened interior at St. Spiridon's is the brightly lit new sanctuary at First Presbyterian Church of Bellevue. This contemporary setting for worship maximizes the introduction of natural light through several large etched glass lantern windows, with each depicting rich biblical imagery.

Presentations by the architect, the craftsman responsible for the highly articulated chancel furnishings, and the stained glass artists will delve into the tapestry of light and imagery. Instrumentalists will demonstrate the acoustics and the sound enhancement systems employed in the design.

A visit to Seattle area houses for worship would not be complete without acknowledging the influence of Asian culture on the Pacific Northwest. In recognition of this, the tour will include brief visits to several area churches that illustrate the range of Asian design motifs. The Seattle Buddhist Temple reflects traditional Japanese design,

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Notes & Comments

(Continued from previous page)

while the Japanese Presbyterian Church illustrates the Asian influence on the regional vernacular of the Pacific Northwest.

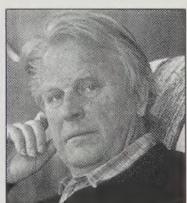
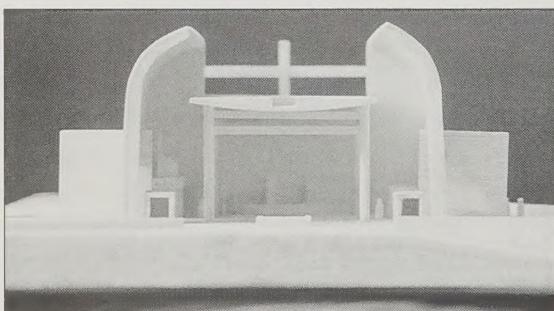
An exciting addition to Seattle's architectural heritage is the newly completed Chapel of St. Ignatius at the Seattle University Campus. Designed by Steven Holl, a Washington native now practicing in New York City, and Olson Sundberg of Seattle, the chapel was featured recently in several architectural publications. Holl's imaginative use of natural light and form creates a distinctive worship environment. From the initial concept, the gathering of different lights shaped the design into a metaphor for gathering diverse cultures into one united ceremony. Representatives from the architectural team will discuss the challenges of this design and how acoustical and lighting issues were resolved.

A final stop will be the newly renovated and award-winning St. James Cathedral in downtown Seattle. This historic structure was skillfully restored and artfully modified to better serve contemporary liturgy. Restoration included seismic upgrading of structural elements, new art, craft, and stained glass, and a complete reordering of the seating configuration that places the majority of the congregation within 60 feet of the central altar. Architect Don Brubeck of The Baumgardner Architects will describe how lighting and acoustical concerns were primary driving forces of the renovation design.

The tour concludes with a reception at The Baumgardner Architects' offices, conveniently located within walking distance of the conference hotel and the popular Market District.—*Douglas Hoffman, IFRAA Chair*

The Pritzker Prize

The Pritzker Prize will be presented to Norwegian architect Sverre Fehn. Among his many impressive projects are the Medmark Cathedral Museum and the Church in Honningsvag North Cape, Norway.



Sverre Fehn, above; model of Honningsvag church, left.

Making Sacred Places

Isn't it unfortunate when we have to choose between two great opportunities? At the same time IFRAA is having its National Conference in Seattle, the College of Design and Architecture of the University of Cincinnati will be having an international conference, "Making Sacred Places," October 16-19. Both have worked hard to present outstanding speakers, symposia, workshops, etc. If you can't attend one perhaps you can attend the other. Some of our IFRAA leaders are speaking at the Cincinnati conference for which the theme is "Built Form and Culture Research." Doesn't this point to our urgent need to communicate with each other about conference dates?

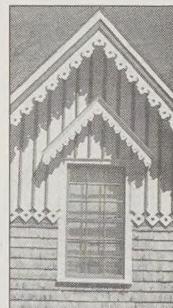
The Burned Churches

Most of us are aware that in 1996 a wave of arsons occurred in African-American churches in the South. Many of the incidents were determined to be racially motivated. When the National Council of Churches in the U.S. asked for the prayers of partners in Africa, the response was overwhelming. Not only were there prayers and

letters of sympathy, but African churches in dire financial situations themselves contributed money to rebuilding the burned-out churches. They expressed appreciation for the chance to share in solidarity.

Gothic Revival Camp Cottages

One hundred fifty of these cottages that grew up on the grounds of a Methodist camp in the first quarter of the 19th century in the Bayside section of Northport, Maine, have been named to the National Register of Historic Places. It was after the Civil War that the Methodist tent sites gave way to the first of the cottages. These camp meeting grounds—and there were many—were intellectual retreats called Chautauquas and were held each summer.



Errata

The annual Awards issue of *Faith & Form* covers a myriad of detail and unfortunately mistakes occur. We want to apologize for errors that appeared in our 1997 Awards issue (No. 1, 1997). Corrected versions of award-winning projects by Conger Fuller Architects of Aspen, Colorado, and LPA, Inc. of Irvine, California, appear below and are available full-size from Brenda Hanlon, 332 Commerce St., Alexandria, VA 22314. □

1997 AIA RELIGIOUS ARCHITECTURE AWARD

Architect:
Conger Fuller Architects
Michael Fuller, AIA, and Steven Conger, AIA
1125 17th Street, Suite 1000
Aspen, CO 81611
(970) 925-3121, Fax: (970) 925-3119

Project:
St. Benedict's Monastery Retreat Center
Glenwood Springs, Colorado

Partner: Joseph Rydell, Uniplex Construction

The retreat center is the connection point between the community at large and the silence and seclusion spirituality of the mountain. The building is a simple rectangular form and with their 3,000 acres nestled in an undeveloped mountain valley, the building is a quiet presence that reflects the nature of the sacred into everyday life. These ideas were translated into the approach to the exterior and the design. A simple, light-colored stone wall surrounds the building, looking like the mountains in the valley were chosen. Thus, visitors and guests should be drawn into the quiet and peace, and

Architect:
LPA, Inc.
1700 University Park Circle
Irvine, CA 92614
(714) 261-1100, Fax: (714) 261-1100

Project:
Solediak Valley Community Church
(interior sanctuary)
Forest Ranch, California

Partner: Kishimoto, Goya, Gennell

The church requires a built environment free of conventional religious symbols. The building is a vertical rectangle, composed of a series of thin columns supporting a translucent roof, and with a strong connection to the outside material light. Openings are few and small.

The program expresses itself through simple elegant building forms composed to create a striking image in the landscape and demonstrate a visual effective method of

that cannot afford the visible steel one at well with the remaining granite. The main building was divided into three connected structures and eight arched colonnades to reduce the scale of the building and to accommodate the requirements of ranch and farm structures in the area.

The interior of the building is a simple space of holding "sacred" feelings around certain experiences. They used the golden sections and the logarithmic spiral frequently found in the architecture of the ancient Greeks and the Renaissance.

The use of operable stationary windows for natural ventilation and the use of translucent panels for natural glazing units, and stone veneer established low operating cost and low maintenance buildings.

low cost and high quality materials. The interior is a simple space of holding "sacred" feelings around certain experiences. They used the golden sections and the logarithmic spiral frequently found in the architecture of the ancient Greeks and the Renaissance.

The use of operable stationary windows for natural ventilation and the use of translucent panels for natural glazing units, and stone veneer established low operating cost and low maintenance buildings.

Revised pages 11 (Conger Fuller, left) and 14 (LPA, Inc., below) from 1997 Awards issue of *Faith & Form*. Right-hand photo on each page had been inadvertently switched. We regret the error.

1997 AIA RELIGIOUS ARCHITECTURE AWARD

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LPA, Inc.
1700 University Park Circle
Irvine, CA 92614
(714) 261-1100, Fax: (714) 261-1100

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enclosed space. Thin concrete and off-the-shelf utilization items were chosen for their speed of erection. The limited use of glass creates a sense of enclosure.

The design reflects the surrounding landscape that houses the church, a prominent and tall. The program can stand in the seclusion and safety areas. These spaces are enclosed by a thin, translucent shell (membrane) defines the interior and becomes the screen wall. The sculptures on the glass curtain wall, chosen by the architect, reflect themselves on exterior glass panels.

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Dr. Eugene Potente, Jr.

We may accurately call our former IFRAA president by this academic title because he recently was awarded honorary doctorates by Carthage College in Kenosha, Wisconsin, and Concordia University in Austin, Texas. Studios of Potente have designed work in 25 states and Canada. Gene's son, E.J. Potente, is a liturgical consultant who is carrying on the studio as the third generation. They have established an Annual Eugene Potente Sr. Memorial Design Competition to honor family tradition.

We Are Number One

In a survey conducted in the North Carolina counties of Wake, Durham and Johnston, some 500 people told radio station WPTF-AM that architects, of all professionals, demonstrate the highest level of integrity and are the most trusted to "act responsibly in the public's best interest."

Of 35 professions, architects were followed, in rank order, by certified public accountants, engineers, teachers, clergy, doctors, nurses. The police ranked 12th, and the news media ranked 18th. Lawyers placed 35th, narrowly edging out politicians and used car salespeople for last place.—AIA-MEMO

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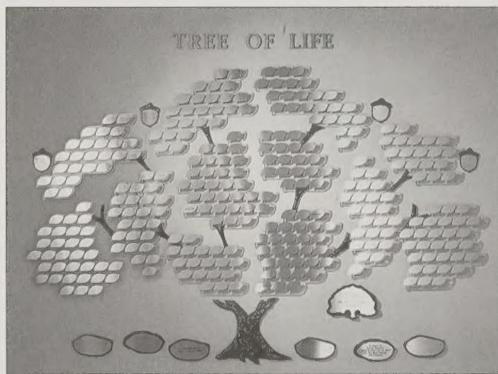
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REMEMBRANCE AND HOPE

By Edward A. Sövik, FAIA



I had lunch with Sigfried Giedion and Victor Christ-Janer not long after *Space Time and Architecture* was published and not long after a famous conference of noted architects and designers was assembled at the Nassau Inn at Princeton to consider the state of the world and the future of design. Mr. Giedion told us of his encounter there with Frank Lloyd Wright. Wright came late to the opening party and, after depositing coat, hat, scarf, cane and gloves in a neat composition on the grand piano, turned around to survey the company. Giedion happened to be near; Wright offered his hand and said, "And who are you?" Giedion (who said he was not a stranger to Wright) responded, "My name is Sigfried Giedion. I am an historian." "Oh," said Wright, "you write history, you don't make history."

This little anecdote seems to be a good way to start these paragraphs because I have been like Wright and every architect a maker of history in one way or another, and not an historian. Because I wrote the major article entitled "What is Religious Architecture?" for the first issue of *Faith & Form*, the editor proposed that I write for the 30th Anniversary issue a retrospective survey. I allowed her to count on these pages, but I am not an historian. I find myself inadequate, and what follows will be, unhappily perhaps, not history so much as paragraphs of reminiscence, reflection and observation.

When I posed the question in the 1967 issue, I cited two people whom I credited

for some illumination on the subject. One was the late Joseph Sittler, the theologian who was a part of the discussion on the art of religion for many years. He challenged with unassailable logic the common assumptions about what "religious" architecture could be, bringing Aristotle's four categories of cause into the conversation. We were led to agree that it isn't sufficient that a building be used by, built by, or owned by religious people; that a building is intended by its designers to be "religious" or is perceived to be "religious;" or has religiousness attributed to it because of certain symbols or patterns of form. Even the last of the categories, which calls for "religiousness" in the essential nature of the architecture itself, was challenged. Can a *thing* be religious?

I thought some help on the issue was to be found in the work of a German professor of comparative religions, who wrote a book in 1910 entitled *The Idea of the Holy*. Rudolf Otto was interested in discovering what it is that is common to all religions; his analysis continues to be read and admired. Otto saw three basic and common elements of religious peoples: the devotion to truth, an ethical commitment and (most important and difficult) a recognition of that which is called the holy, an attribute that is troublesome to define. The question facing the architect, then, is whether architecture can somehow participate in these commonalities and, in this participation, justify being called religious architecture.

I suggested in 1967 that architecture can participate in those fundamental qualities. For those who don't remember or have access to that first issue of *Faith & Form*, it might be interesting to supply a brief review of what those pages proposed at considerable, but still not

exhaustive, length. It seems to me that the 30 years have not disproved the essential arguments, and that they still provide a starting point for designers who want their work to reflect a religious position in the ambience of its architecture.

In respect of the first leg of Otto's tripod, the commitment to truth (in a broad sense that has nothing to do with theological or sectarian differences), it can be said that architecture can demonstrate a commitment to truth by being authentic in materials and structure, avoiding all artificialities and affectations. There is much more than that. There is a faithfulness to function, an attentiveness to all details of its existence as habitation. There is concern for coherence within itself, for integrity between a structure and its site, and ultimately between a building and the order of the created world, in proportion, for instance. The search for truth goes on and on. And the point is that just as the religious person aims toward a life of full integrity, and those around such a person are stimulated or encouraged to live honestly, so those who live or work or worship in a place of candor and forthright integrity are encouraged in their commitment to truth.

The second factor of religions deals with ethics—the issues of right and wrong, good and bad, righteousness or sin. Among the various religions there are varied definitions of right and wrong behavior, it is true. But there is no religion that fails to deal with ethics, and there are, on the whole, some strong agreements. In the Judeo-Christian communities, the consensus would be around the ideals of the common good, unselfishness, mutual respect and love. It seemed to me apparent that architec-

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ture frequently denies these values in such ways as impersonality, pomposity, brutality, even boredom. And that the word "hospitality" might be descriptive of the nature of ethics as demonstrated in architecture. Grace, dignity, generosity and a series of other attributes of the truly hospitable person can be applied to architecture, and if the architecture is to reflect the religious heart these attributes are appropriately present.

It is thus reasonable to expect in the architecture of religious people the evidence of a commitment to truth and to goodness, but what about that word "holy"? How can the holy be given a presence in architecture?

Otto is helpful because he provides a definition. The devotion to truth and to righteousness can be undertaken by people who don't think of themselves as religious; but the word holy is uniquely religious. The holy is the *Mysterium Tremendum et Fasinosum*, the undefinable, unknowable, ineffable, infinite and eternal Mystery, remote and awe-full, yet fascinating. The holy is perceived not by reason but by intuition. It is beyond understanding and analysis, but is an undeniable part of human history and experience.

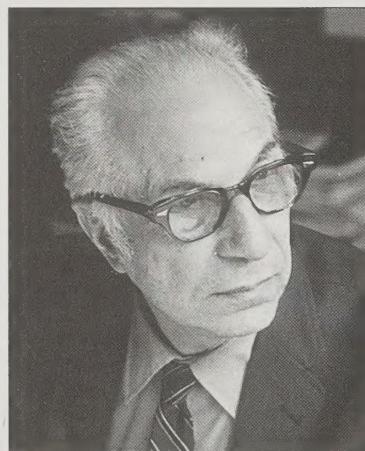
How can architecture have anything to do with the holy? Is there a quality in architecture that evokes the holy as other qualities deal with the true and the good, and by doing so participate in the religious? The quality is beauty. There is no other thing or experience that can beckon us into the sense of wonder—a wonder that is the echo of the sense of awe that we experience in epiphanies of the *Mysterium Tremendum*. This has been a frequent observation made by poets and surely a general experience. Thus, to speak of religious buildings is to recognize in them the ambience of authenticity, of hospitality and of beauty.

There are some important corollaries to this: Religious architecture is as likely to be so-called secular architecture as to be the architecture of religious institutions, perhaps even more likely, since the affectation of the religious called religiosity is rarely present. And for architects who are faith-committed, it is reasonable that the qualities of religious architecture should be present in all their work.

Another corollary is that *all* beauty can carry the invitation toward the holy. There is no religious beauty in distinction from secular beauty. And if we

accept this our eyes can be open to the ubiquity of the divine presence, and our lives made rich.

As I have noted, what those pages of 1967 said seems to me to be fundamental still. And yet as I have been working through the following decades I have been approaching an understanding about the making of the beautiful that is different from my earlier thinking. I suspect that many people have come earlier than I to the dictum of Eric Gill, that gifted, pious, strange, versatile and verbose English artist of the pre-WWII decades. "Take care of Truth and Goodness," he said, "and Beauty will take care of herself." Perhaps that's the way it works. If we struggle with the search for the real, authentic and whole in all its ramifications and subtleties, and work



Dr. Joseph Sittler, theologian, was part of the discussion of the art of religion for many years.

earnestly with imagination and sensibility to make our buildings places of humanity, beauty may possibly come as a gift.

Now, having described a personal change, in reminiscence, I am propelled into reflecting on a dozen changes that have come in the area of architecture that has occupied my mind, the architecture not simply of religion but of the Christian church. These changes have come because architecture responds to theology, piety and liturgy and these aspects of faith themselves change. The post-WWII decades have been rich with change, but of course the roots of the changes go further back than a person who is not an historian is able to delve. Nor is the bundle of changes subject to a sequential listing as a chain of events. It is almost as if looking back we survey a

countryside where receding floodwaters have left a landscape consequentially changed. And one can take note of the changes, being glad for them and not much concerned about the precise sources and currents that have produced the changes. Yet we may observe that the flood has seemed to return the streams to courses that were theirs in ancient times.

There have been two or three strong intentions that have given direction to change. One of them is a renewed emphasis on the Incarnation as a paradigm. If God in Christ has taken human form, then the barrier between sacred and secular is breached. Fane and profane are not separate, the holy is present in the real world. If God is thus accessible there is no need for a temple or a House of God. The place of worship is not a convenience for God but for the people of God, a *domus ecclesiae*. No need then for architectural forms and details that attempt to provide God with an other-worldly home. Common materials and building systems are appropriate for places of worship; indeed, the attachment to the real world may be represented by earthy, humble materials like clay and concrete, and by clear glass open to the world.

Clearly the affinity to the Gothic and Georgian is gone. And the repertory of "religious" symbols and devices that used to evoke the special sanctity of the *domus dei* are not required. Stained glass, sculpture and other plastic arts are used almost as they might be used in other places of assembly. The devices like indirect light that are intended to supply a sense of mystery are less often seen. The strongest change of all is the introduction into these places, which are primarily intended for a worshiping assembly, features that can make them not only usable but hospitable to assemblies of other sorts. These features—movable furnishings, adaptable lighting and other elements of flexibility—give church people some advantage in their intent to be useful servants of their neighbors. More important, perhaps, is that it is hard for people who have natural affinities for temples to think of multifunctional places as temples.

Altogether these and other moves toward asserting that all the world can be seen as God's house and therefore holy, have made an immense change in the ambience of the place of worship and brought to them, at best, a new kind of

beauty as well as truth and hospitality.

A second profound change that has come to churches is in the self-understanding of the community of believers and of the actions about which the people gather in worship. This change has resulted not in alterations in the ambience of church buildings but in the shapes and configurations of the places of the assembly. Something radical has happened: the ancient norm of the basilican form with its narthex, nave and choir (or chancel) is no longer acceptable. In place of three we have two spaces. One of them is where *all* the worshippers, those who used to inhabit both the nave and chancel, assemble together in one room. It replaces the chancel; the nave is gone. Why this is so will be clear presently.

The other space is a smaller but still generous room, called variously concourse, foyer or gathering room, through which people move to and from the liturgical assembly. It replaces the narthex, which served only as a transitional moment. The gathering space is quite different; it is intentionally a place of encounter and interaction where people can spend, not a moment, but as much time as they wish. The need for this room responds to sociological as well as liturgical factors. Since it is commonplace in our society for people to see friends only once a week, at church, they need a sheltered place to "catch up"; this often can't happen in the liturgical space because multiple services or masses prevent it. The earliest programmed gathering spaces I know came in the mid-60s, and they have become the norm not because liturgical authorities prescribed them, but simply out of felt need.

The contribution these gathering spaces make to the faith life of the churches comes about because emphatic attention of theologians, liturgists, church historians and others has focused on "participatory" worship. It is an exaggeration to say that until recent decades people went to church as individuals, but now they come as members of a community, a family. And that the assembly was divided into two—performers and audience. It is also an exaggeration to attribute the great change exclusively to the force of the documents that emerged out of Vatican II. But it is easy to see in the basilica scheme, where the people in the pews saw no other pew-sitter's face, a similarity to a cinema where people are essentially alone. And although the rood

screens of medieval times were almost all removed in the sixteenth century, the two-space church remains as part of the Gothic scheme, and appeared in many Georgian-style buildings as well. There have been important exceptions to the two-space axial scheme; it is true, but when most people think of a "traditional" church, that is in their minds.

The reduction from two rooms to one is only part of the story of change. At least as important in the effort to assert architecturally the unity of the Body of Christ is the *shape* of the room and the configuration of the furnishings. If the community of believers is a "family," which is the figure used repeatedly in the New Testament, then the gathering may reasonably assemble as a family assembles, where each person is as much aware

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of every other person as possible. A circle?

For various liturgical reasons the simple circle hasn't worked very well; but the idea of people closely gathered at or around the "family table" in any of a variety of simple geometries is now normal, and the space and features that used to separate the people from the centers of liturgy are reduced to a minimum.

The urgent agenda is to destroy the performer/audience scheme; various devices have been introduced that strengthen the notion that everybody is now within the "chancel." This may mean distributing table, pulpit and font widely. It certainly means that kneeling rails are gone and the area that used to be called the "sanctuary" in Roman Catholic churches can now be indistinguishable. It usually brings choirs down from galleries and relocates vestries so clergy enter through the same door as lay people.

I believe that the "guitar mass" and the many varieties of music, which are a way of encouraging the involvement of more people in worship, have already passed the stage of exuberant experiment—

music doesn't have to be "church music" and the provisions for musical variety are provided for. Still, pipe organ builders are multiplying and are busy, which suggests that the appreciation for the authentic is healthy.

One of the alternatives to the axial, nave-and-chancel plan in this country has been a scheme used so frequently by so-called non-liturgical churches, an auditorium room that, except for the absence of a proscenium curtain and stage furniture, is much like a theater, with raked floor and seating in concentric rings. That all the people are in one room doesn't change the fact that these places perceive the community divided into performers and audience. So the current renewal is also affecting those who have inherited that tradition. But the theatrical character apparent in this tradition is probably the root system which, grafted onto the culture of popular entertainment, has brought the larger, sometimes immense, buildings that attract thousands of people to their worship services. Architecturally, Philip Johnson's Crystal Cathedral is significant among them but not typical. These churches have an affinity to the evangelistic crusades of the American frontier, and perhaps it is to be expected that their architecture, rising almost as fast as tents, should be of uncertain quality, with Branson or Nashville the models. Whether they merge the secular and the holy successfully is a question I am not qualified to assess.

The "mega churches" often describe themselves as non-denominational, and, I should think, do so not because they want to separate themselves from the institutional bodies but because they are impatient and perceive themselves as practical ecumenists. They can thus be seen as a kind of independent stream within the great and hopeful current that has been a part of the last decades. The influence of ecumenism on the architecture of churches has been more and more apparent. It is this that has made it possible to put together paragraphs like these with minimum references to denominational particularities, and still hope that they are generally relevant. That the people of various denominations have been able to learn from each other and to emphasize in their new buildings those architectural qualities and forms that denominations have in common, is a most satisfying and hopeful feature of the last 30 years. □

SEEKING THE SACRED

A Response to Edward Sövik's "Remembrance and Hope"

By Douglas R. Hoffman, AIA



Reviewing Edward Sövik's contribution "Remembrance and Hope," I find little to challenge in his argument. A commitment in architecture to reflect truth, ethos, integrity and beauty is irrefutable whether discussing the sacred or the secular. Where we part company, if indeed we do, is in the extension of his argument as it applies to seeking the holy or sacred.

In his 1967 article that appeared in the premiere issue, he states, "The only justification for the use of the term 'religious architecture' at all, perhaps, is a quality in the architecture itself which makes it a reflection, an expression, an echo, an evocation, a communication of the religious understanding or vision." Agreeing with this principle, I am troubled to understand how this might be construed to blur the distinction between secular and sacred architecture.

If we are to assume that religious architecture sets a higher standard to which all secular architecture must aspire, then this is an altruism that has not been demonstrated by experience. Rather, the all-too-familiar pattern is religious architecture that has been "dumbed-down" and resembles the hodgepodge of economically driven commercial architecture. Mega-churches are often indistinguishable from shopping malls with their food courts of canopied tables and chairs.

I frankly prefer to seek a more sacred environment. As Sövik notes, Rudolph

Otto introduced "mysterium tremendum" in his seminal work on spiritual psychology, *Das Heilige* (The Idea of the Holy). We also owe Otto a debt for coining the term "numinous," which also has shaped our understanding of the sacred. Otto began with the Latin term *numen*, a derivative of *numina*, which ancient farmers in Italy associated with special places and drew a comparison with the relative meanings of omen and ominous to coin numinous. His intent was to arrive at a term that conveyed the full magnitude of mystery, awe, spontaneous joy, and dread inherent in an encounter with the holy. It is a primal, irreducible experience, intricately woven into our sense of sacred place.

Mircea Eliade expanded this conception of sacred place by exploring the similarities of symbolic presentation used by very diverse cultures to mark sacred space. The "axis mundi," or world axis, was a common symbolic representation of the attempt to create a world center, to obtain a fixed point and acquire orientation in the chaos of homogeneity. "The experience of sacred space makes possible the 'founding of the world': where the sacred manifests itself in space, *the real unveils itself*, the world comes into existence" (1959, p. 63).

In *Placeways*, Eugene Walter's recent phenomenological study of the human environment, the definition of sacred place becomes a specific environment that supports the imagination, nourishes religious experience, and conveys religious truth. It organizes sight and sound, introduces light to present clarity and order, or makes things dark to suggest unseen presences and hidden power (1989, p. 75).

These descriptions confer a very special "otherness" to sacred space that simply will not be discernible in secular architecture. So what architectural char-

acteristics do begin to mark sacred space? My own research has suggested a multitude of elements, but attempting to present a reasonable and comprehensible argument, I have grouped them into three categories: architectural, archetypal and atmospheric. While all three categories have a physical form, architectural and archetypal elements also dwell in the domain of presentational symbolism, i.e., allusive imagery. Archetypal elements draw on primal forms in the Jungian sense of the collective unconscious. Atmospheric elements embody the ambiguities of oppositional forces as they transition from one state to become another.

The category of architectural elements is concentrated on the setting for ritual movement, epitomized by the action of passage through gate and pathway to reach place. Experiencing these aspects of architecture mirrors a pilgrim's progress in a spiritual quest. *Gate* represents the desire, *path* the journey, and *place* the attainment of spiritual insight. This cycle is repeated almost mantra-like in the life of the devotee in search of ever-higher levels of spiritual fulfillment. Interpreting these elements architecturally provides opportunities to embed symbolic content that speaks to the mystery of spiritual inquiry and transcendence.

The *gate* marks the beginning of the spiritual experience with a definitive entry to the sacred zone. In ancient times, when new cities were formed, the founding members determined a site, and then ceremonially plowed a large furrow to define the boundary. This action marked the sacred territory. Only the gate was left untrenched, representing the portal between the protected precinct and the world beyond.

The *path* represents the journey from

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initiation to transformation. It provides a way to gain knowledge, but perhaps more importantly, to awaken consciousness (Lawlor 1994, p. 32). The pathway provides the design opportunity for sacrality through ritualized passage. Architecture has the capacity to frame this environment and determine the ritual entry sequence.

Place, in an architectural context, is imbued with meaning. It is the destination, the culmination of the spiritual journey, the Bo tree under which Buddha had enlightenment, and the locus of the sacred. Place embodies fulfillment and architecturally needs to convey this harmonious completeness.

The cycle of gate, path and place can be incorporated into a series of transitional experiences, mirroring the need to obtain ever higher planes of spiritual understanding. The walk from the parking lot to the building, the pathway through a courtyard, the threshold of an entry sequence, the entrance into the sanctuary, and the final passage down an aisle to an altar, pulpit, ark or mirab; these all offer design opportunities to convey this symbolic message.

Archetypal elements are symbols of a cosmic order and an unconscious link to the realm of the sacred. The symbolic references to archetypes operate in many realms, but I limit this discussion to the *universal, religious* (or *mythic*) and *geometric*. *Universal* refers to the ancient concept of four primary elements: earth, air, water and fire. While these overlap with religious traditions and mythos, they are also primary and stand alone. Symbols of water, for example, pervade most cultures and religions as signs of renewal and rebirth. Affirming these with a visible presence in the place of worship marks sacred space and participates as a primary element in the ritual of worship.

Religious (or *mythic*) refers to those archetypes most commonly associated with cultural identification to religious beliefs. Derived in part from Eliade's extensive study of the history of religions, I have identified these archetypes as axial pillar, tree, stone and sacred mountain. The axial pillar serves to center the world (*axis mundi*); the tree symbolically marks sacred space and speaks to growth, renewal and knowledge. From the time that Jacob used a stone to mark the site (Beth-el) where God's presence was revealed to him in a dream, as told in Chapter 28 of the Book of Genesis, stones have been used to mark sacred

places. The sacred mountain embraces many traditions, polytheistic and monotheistic, but somehow symbolizes the realm where humankind speaks to God.

The final subcategory of archetypes is *geometric*, and refers to the use of "sacred geometries," i.e., pure geometric forms such as squares, circles, triangles and composites of these forms (Lawlor 1982). Throughout history architects, planners and builders have returned to pure and primary forms to express sacred space. Biblical descriptions of Solomon's Temple involve precise geometries, with the holy of holies contained in the innermost sanctum, a square within a series of concentric square and rectilinear volumes.

Atmospheric elements involve the transition of oppositional forces. Expressed ambiguously, their meaning lies not in the final state, but in the spiritual energy transmitted through the dynamic tension between them. The state of "becoming," of light becoming darkness, or noise dimming to silence, of profusion becoming emptiness, or monumentality becoming humility, these transitions are the portals to the sacred experience.

Architecturally addressing atmospheric markers of the sacred can be the most difficult to achieve, yet the most evocative when done successfully. They tend to occur in the leftover spaces: the alcoves, chapels and side aisles. Almost accidents of the design, these become the special places endowed with the mystery lacking in the larger volume of the sanctuary naves. They adjoin the larger spaces but establish their own character through contrasts of light and darkness, or silence and noise. They are humble within monumental spaces and convey a peaceful emptiness with a profuse environment.

Returning to Rudolph Otto, he identified three characteristics in religious art and architecture that point to the numinous: darkness, silence and emptiness (or empty distance). "The darkness must be such as is enhanced and made all the more perceptible by contrast with some last vestige of brightness, which it is...on the point of extinguishing; hence the 'mystical' effect begins with semi-darkness" (p. 68). The silence he referred to was the spontaneous reaction to the feeling of an actual numinous presence. Emptiness, or empty distance, was derived from Otto's observation of oriental art and architecture. "Chinese architecture...does not achieve the impression

of solemnity by lofty vaulted halls or imposing altitudes, but nothing could well be more solemn than the silent amplitude of the enclosed spaces, courtyards, and vestibules which it employs" (p. 69).

Thus, atmospheric elements contribute in a meaningful way to creating the sacred environment. Whether occasioned by intent or by accident, the role they play is evocative and awakens our consciousness. As Otto stated at the beginning of this century, experiencing the sacred cannot be taught, it can only be evoked, awakened in the mind.

The interrelationship of these three categories of elements (architectural, archetypal and atmospheric) is that together they add depth and dimension to the religious experience. As symbols of the sacred they direct attention in a highly marked way. They support the imagination, nourish and enhance religious experience, and convey meaning to elicit truth. Simply stated, these elements when combined and crafted with care, make space sacred.

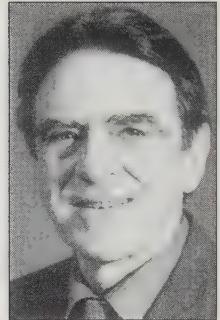
The use of architectural markers to the sacred often transcends the differences between diverse faith groups, with only functional specifics and traditional iconography providing distinguishing clues as to the particular faith. In this sense, I agree with Ed Sövik's concluding remarks that ecumenism has had a positive influence on religious architecture, reducing denominational particularities. However, I fear for the trend away from articulating the sacred in architecture. I believe we need more sacred environments, not less. □

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THE CHALLENGE OF INNOVATION

By Bertram L. Bassuk, FAIA



Most of us are aware of the increasing phenomenon of what are called mega-churches. Cutting across denominational lines, they are attracting huge numbers of people and therefore are in need of buildings to fit their innovative programming. One is told their rapid growth is because they are meeting the contemporary needs of parishioners that traditional churches are not.

Besides large sanctuaries that seat thousands of people, they may offer a restaurant, swimming pool, a bowling alley, gymnasium, even apartments. In fact, a complex is needed to fill their needs.

I would like to suggest that architects and allied artists should be considering the impact of this phenomenon on the design of future religious buildings. To enter into such a dialogue, we should first look at the basic characteristics of the mega-church.

First, the architect works from a program composed of a strong, and usually charismatic, individual or pastor who in partnership with a corporate board of directors, is the sole owner of the physical church. The congregation does not share in ownership. Thus, its role of entrepreneur requires that its ministry be a successful business venture. Mission and monetary reward are symbiotic and consistent with the American experience.

Second, the mega-church emphasizes mainly an emotional, rather than an intellectual, response. It offers creature comforts, social intercourse and enjoyment—all are an integral part of the day's devotions. An example: a family with small children and little time for

diversion can have a Sabbath of togetherness that includes others, and with something good for everyone; religious devotion, escape from boredom and isolation, praying and playing under one roof. The religious experience and the secular experience are in dynamic tension.

Third, the mega-church sees its form of worship as an alternative to traditional ritual. Its style encourages spontaneity in the form of music making, body language, praying and singing out loud and in unison, dancing and perhaps speaking in tongues.

Architects and allied artists should consider the impact of the mega-church phenomenon on the design of future religious buildings.

It gives a more direct, less structured, less constrained path to the grace of God and salvation. The Bible is supreme, not the clergy. Mainstream theologians have been observing this divergence from the legacy of traditional Christian ritual with apprehension, fascination and even guarded approval. They refer to these new churches as Post-Denominational. Americans are familiar with evangelistic ministries on television and radio and now they are increasingly aware of an opportunity to attend a kind of church that promises to satisfy spiritual hungers not met by the churches they have known.

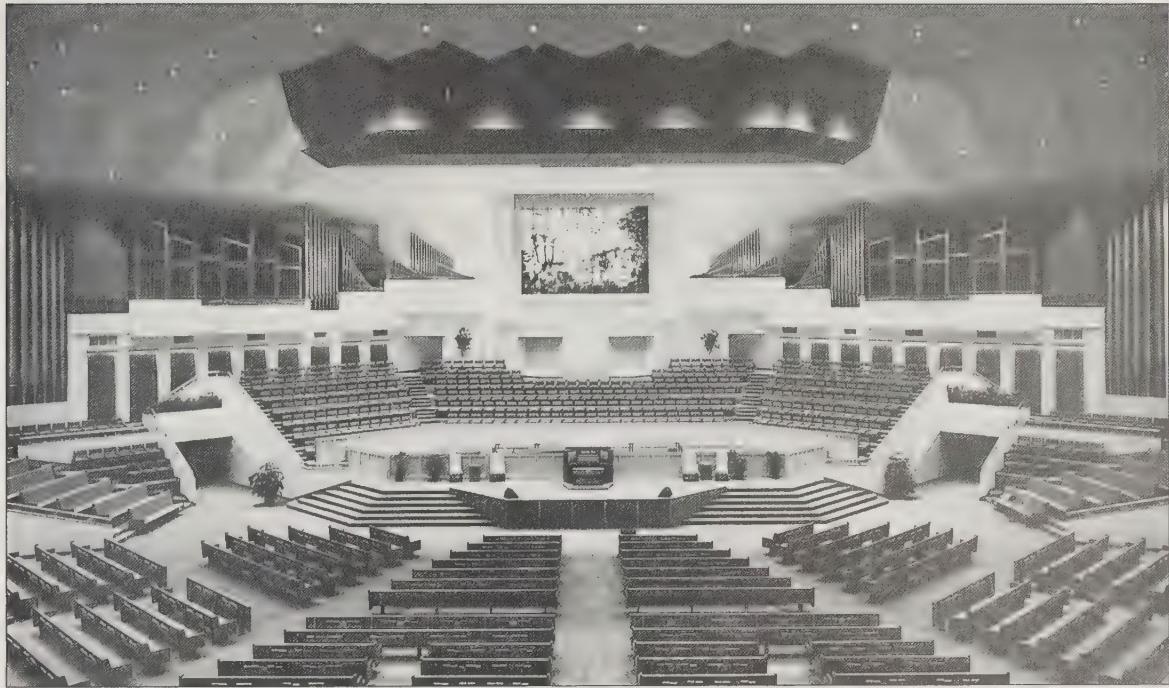
Is it conceivable that the building type of the emerging mega-complex will

become the norm? Will it be closer to the vernacular and secular than to the traditional and religious? If so, this could exert a strong influence on the architectural community. Church design would tend more to realistic programming, greater emphasis on economy of construction and the relinquishing of romantic symbolism and preconceived spatial concepts. There would be more spatial continuity and flexibility. The use of vernacular construction would prevail and only the expression of the program would distinguish a religious building from any other. Of course, if this does happen *time will turn the new form into a tradition and the form into a concept.*

Hitherto theologians and architects have searched for ways to assure that both the church exterior and interior express a numinous quality that the congregants would experience as sacred space. They have wanted the space to be distinctive from secular architecture. Is this no longer desirable? Does the growing popularity of mega-churches indicate that different forms are needed? The architect will have to consider whether there is an organic connection between ritual and organic form. Does the huge-ness of the mega-space mitigate against quality and character of the form? If it does, what is the aesthetic responsibility of the architect?

It may be instructive to note that there are similarities and analogies in Judaism, the "mother" religion of Christianity that may be relevant. With the demise of the Temple and the Jewish state there arose the "synagogue" (Greek for place of assembly) prototype for the threefold unitary purpose of prayer, study and meeting. None of these spaces were or are to this day considered sacred. There is no priesthood (the rabbi is considered a more learned participant), and each

BERTRAM L. BASSUK, FAIA, wrote this article just before his death on March 2, 1997. He was a member of IFRAA's Board and the Publications Committee for several years. (See our memorial in the last issue [No. 1, 1997].)



First Baptist Church, Orlando, Fla., Hatfield and Halcomb (Dallas), architect, seats more than 6,000 people. Pipe organ (center) built by Schantz Organ Company, Orrville, Ohio.

synagogue is autonomous.

During the eighteenth century when Judaism was intensely Talmudic and rational, a reaction called Hasidism set in, which is analogous to the evangelical movement in Protestantism. Adherents were drawn to this more emotional and mystical movement and sought to relate it to God with joyous ritual in music and dance.

Some would say that in general, Judaism's synagogues bear closer resemblance to Post-Denominational mega-churches than to the traditional Christian churches. In fact, in many suburbs across the U.S., mega-synagogues are being built. A fundamental difference, however, is that they are owned collectively.

It is interesting also that the megachurch concept is not without precedent in American religious architecture. In 1923, the Reverend Christian Reisner, a Kansas-born charismatic minister of a small Methodist church on upper Broadway, New York City, set out to replace it with a 40-story building with a 75-foot-high revolving cross on its tower that was "to shoot rays of orange and red light into the sky." It was to be called the Broadway Temple and was intended to "make the business of religion the success it ought to be," and "to

let God come to Broadway." Its "five-story" basement housed a swimming pool, bowling alley and gymnasium. For children there were nurseries and rooftop playgrounds; for people of all ages, there were classrooms, a cafeteria and a large social hall. Parishioners could even live in the church...two 12-story apartment buildings wrapped around the base of the "cathedral" and 500 dormitory rooms occupied the tower. The sanctuary would seat 2,000. In 1929, when the basement facilities were completed, the project "was blown asunder by the stock market crash."

And so there is much to contemplate and pursue in dialogue. It was Daniel Burnham, the chief architect of the 1892 World Columbian Exposition in Chicago and the Flatiron Building in New York City who said:

"Make no little plans, they have no magic to stir men's blood, and probably themselves will not be realized. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work; remembering that a noble, logical diagram once recorded will never die, but long after we are gone will be a living thing, asserting itself with ever-growing insistence. Remember that our sons and grandsons are going to do things that stagger us. Let your watchword be order and your beacon beauty." □

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THE SACRED ROOM

By Kjell Lund



Life is a mystery. In all cultures and religions, the generations document their quest for understanding of themselves and their existence. Recognition, belief and insight oscillate between the rational and irrational, knowledge and myth, fact and allegory, concept and illustration. The forms administer and liberate, but can also inhibit the ability to understand.

Existentially, we are both subject and object. Our ability to reflect is the most distinguished achievement of creation. "In awe of life," said Albert Schweitzer.

Architecture presupposes a dialectic process to attain quality. Practical functions take place within an adapted, concretely configurative synthesis. Psychological functions are linked to architectonic aesthetics by an adaptation to location and surroundings, design of interior and facade, choice of technology, symbolic effect.

Functionally, clear distinctions may be drawn between profane and sacred rooms. Psychologically, the boundaries are unclear because the room is a function of architectural quality.

Buildings for institutional and cultural purposes are profane, although they may project a genuinely or quasi-sacred image.

A religious building is by definition sacred as it represents the transcendental and liturgical. It does not really matter if the architectonic expression is borrowed from more secular buildings.

The concepts—profane and sacred, worldly and holy—are like countless contradictions, opposite polarities.

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A religious artist or architect seeks the source of faith and the mysteries of the cult as the basis for his or her work. Those who avoid doing this must nonetheless take on comparable professional responsibility for the practical and psychological functions of their spaces.

Interpretation of the intentions of historical religious architecture can lead us to the connection between the architectonic elements that give character and identity, and our own personal perception of these. Every sacred building documents the process that took place as the project assumed its form.

The Psychological Function

The architectonic aim of the sacred room is to serve the liturgy, but also to elevate and liberate us to an expanded awareness of being. This is true for all sacred buildings, from the hermit's primitive hut to the Vatican's carefully staged splendor.

The concept of the sacred room reaches from the majestic Egyptian colonnades, the Roman basilica's powerful vault, the Gothic cathedrals, the ornamentation of the mosques, the church-palace of the Renaissance, and the luxuriant sensibility of the Baroque era. The sacred room may be experienced under the starry heaven of a winter night. It exists within ourselves. All physical manifestations are projections of visions, materialized in practical reality to maintain psychological and potential quality. Ornulf Ranheimsaeter, artist, wrote that art introduces a measure of cleanliness into the world, a measure of freedom from convention that redeems our vitality.

The genuinely sacred room does this. One Dutch priest, who was himself an artist, noticed that everyone who listened to the choir in his monastery church smiled. The jaw muscles relax when we see something beautiful. The experiences of the senses precede reflection.

A generation ago the Polish architect Oscar Hansen introduced what he called the "open form"—a minimally structured building. He modeled sculptures that were like sermons without words and that prepared the way for a message that was up to the participant to express. His point was that the open form demands greater motivation, greater creativity than if the room's contents and character are fixed and defined.

The danger with the defined pattern is that the language of its form can become manipulative and its adaptation to function a rigid aesthetic. Though the interiors of many restored Catholic churches have been done with sensitivity and professional insight, in a psychological sense, they often leave little freedom for subjective searching and doubt.

Fortuitous Accidents

Planning of St. Hallvard's Monastery was a long progression from expressive and extroverted forms to introverted conclusions: first on blueprint and later in the section that repeats the geometric constellations of square and circle. It came as a surprise that this theme could be distorted yet again during expansion of the monastery. The dialogue that the architects conducted with themselves can be detected on the exterior. It is fascinating to discover that one can grope blindly and happen upon figures that represent universal symbols.

To lead rainwater down from the inverted roof of the cupola over the church was difficult and we sketched many subtle forms out toward the cleft over the main entrance. It was also necessary to create a demarcated room inside the door, and so I took a chance and placed a prism of square groundplan freely in the circular room. On the pretext of hiding a drainpipe and a broom closet we stumbled upon an archetypal symbol.



Eidsvag Church interior, "a room of light within light."

Developing an Open Form

St. Hallvard has an extremely fixed structure, but at the end of the '60s, Pastor Ole Saeverud and I worked together to make it possible for the interior to have a differentiated and flexible liturgy. We developed plans for a neutral church where the liturgy could find freer functional forms. Fixed forms can interfere with the holy service and its message. When this emphasis was presented during a competition for Eidsvag Church, the council of bishops said "No."

We did, however, create a room of light within light and chose Gunnar Torvund's figure of Christ, which is violently provocative. Alone it could stir our deep and partly subconscious feeling of guilt over our materialistic lifestyle and lack of solidarity with repressed peoples.

Preservation and Ruins

Our project was to raise a protective building over the cathedral ruins at Hamar and to make some changes in the sacred room. The ruin relates actively to the surrounding landscape and lends the location an unusually powerful spirituality. This feeling will change perhaps when the protective building is in place and the ruin takes on the feeling of a display object, but simultaneously the focus on the original basilica will be strengthened. A constellation will arise between the old ruin in stone and the new cathedral in glass, an interplay between past and present, between absence and presence. The braiding detail on the warped glass surface is almost as subtle as in the pyramid at the Louvre. Advanced technology produces new, exciting expressions.

The project has been in a variety of journals and in a traveling exhibition of sacred architecture in Europe.

The Multicultural Church

St. Magnus Church at Lillestrom has 40 nationalities in its membership. It is a thoroughly structuralistic building in which the figurative visually dominates the modular elements. We were able to integrate the curves and rectangles within a linear blanket-structure, in which sections of the church were presented in the facades. The sanctuary consists of six transverse naves with two incorporated into one with greater ceiling height.

The configurative theme of prefabricated concrete shells relates to sacred architecture in most national cultures.

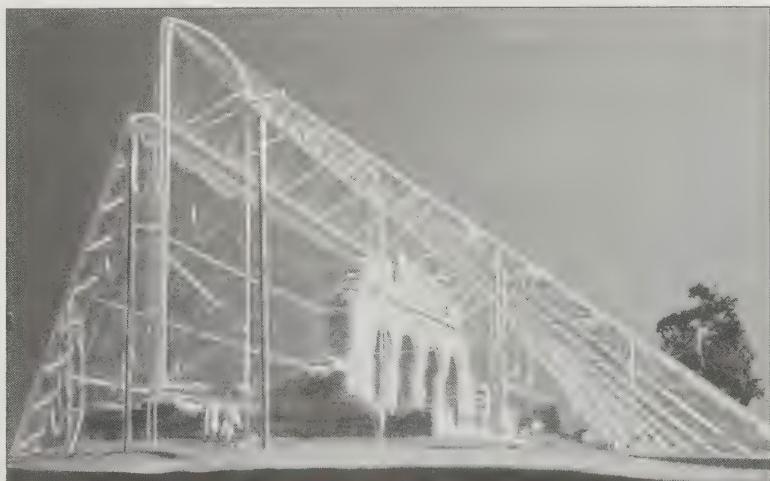
Here, the shells are cantilevered, producing an expressive tension upwards to the rows of downlights, in contrast to the traditional barrelled vault, which is constructionally based on the cornerstone principle.

The form of the church in both horizontal and vertical plan is in principle uniform. The integration of the cubic and circular forms is distributed and the room has a more balanced composition regarding the introspective and extroverted. The floor is a prayer mat of ochre tiling with pine kneeling benches. During services, sunlight traces figures on the vaulted ceiling and walls. One feels in transit. The room is striving to interpret an existential situation.

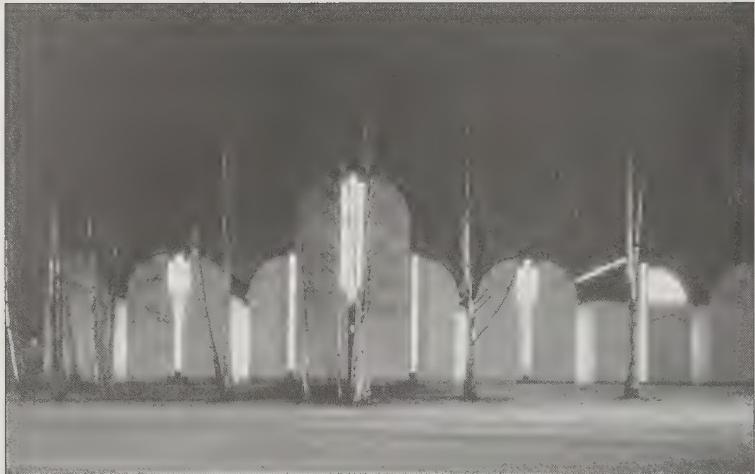
Nuns in Reclusion

The Carmelite convent in Tromso is the world's most northerly site. The Sisters own nothing and are totally self-sufficient. They build a convent for 25 million kroner without money in the bank. During the building, they are released from some of their vows and work together with the entrepreneur on the building, well assisted by uncles and cousins from Poland who work only for their food and room. Now and then they sing and play for us beautiful Psalms and Polish folk songs. In their workshops they embroider, paint, create beautiful flower petal collages and practice carpentry.

Because they live so isolated in their reclusion, with ten hours of daily prayer and liturgy and without newspapers, radio, television or mirror; attend to all the practical needs of their daily existence; and live in Tromso with the con-



Protective building over cathedral ruins at Hamar.



St. Magnus at Lillestrom integrates the curves and rectangles within a linear blanket structure.

stant darkness of mid-winter, it is vital that the interiors in the convent capture light and that the windows are large and positioned so that the rays of light are many and long, and that the views of the fjord and the mountains of Kvaloya appear as seasonally changing patterns of wallpaper on the walls of the corridors, cells and recreation rooms.

Formal Experiments

The art historian Wenche Findahl has written a Master of Arts thesis on the development of sacred Norwegian architecture as portrayed during the years 1950-1980. This book presents a rich and exciting cross-section of the ideology and aesthetics of church building in the post-war period. Instead of a moderate cultivation of the traditional, this era is characterized by an intense experimental-

tion with expressive forms. It may mean that most of us were searching for a new architectonic expression, a new character that might serve as a catalyst for the spiritual values that the church represents, but which we could not achieve through the liturgy of a church stiffened by convention. It was more honorable to search alone than to lose oneself in prototypes.

After having gone through such a process, one more clearly perceives that great church builders have had the same desire to renew and define the pictorial language and that they too found a path to primordial images.

There is great research potential in more closely justifying the relationships between architectonic composition and psychological function in sacred buildings. As a humble introduction to the problem, I will briefly describe four sig-

nificantly different sacred rooms.

The Pantheon

Is it possible today, as it was 2,000 years ago in Rome, to design for contemplation and meditation that appeals to all of us, without creating a feeling of perplexity and sham for those who stand outside the circle of believers and initiated?

The Pantheon is a religious room created for liturgical ceremony at the beginning of our own time scale and is the oldest building in continuous use in Europe. Regardless of religious profession, faith and explanation as to what the room symbolizes or how it functions, it still takes hold of your soul and manifests the experience of a timeless existential dimension. In the Pantheon the union of body and soul is complete. The light and power of the universe strike out through our earthly existence and our lives in time. The 2,000-year-old temple punches us in the mental solar plexus.

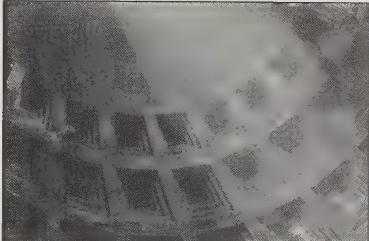
The Stave Church

The powers of the unconscious and subconscious meet us also in the north wall of Urnes, before we enter the sanctum. The stave church is the primordial image of a building with a complex symbolic content, which pristinely articulates the concept of polarity. Shingle-covered galleries of an intimate scale and tar-smelling panels represent the near, daily, concrete and realistic. They enclose the church, the peripheral and central zones, which are delineated by powerful bearing columns—the staves. The floor plan transforms the distance from the surrounding world into the chancel, from



Carmelite convent in Tromso, the world's most northerly site, has large windows to capture as much light as possible. Convent chapel at right





The 2,000-year-old Pantheon, Europe's oldest building in continuous use, is a religious room created for liturgical ceremony.

the extroverted to the introverted, from the profane to the sacred. The roof raises itself up—roof over roof to the steeple figure. The church subtly conveys the association between the horizontal and the vertical, with the nearness of the concrete and the remoteness of the lofty. A corresponding transformation takes place from light to darkness. Inside, in the church's dimness, we still see the forms, constructions, decorations and liturgical objects.

The stave church is an archaic, accomplished work of art, with its roots in a vital fertility culture and higher reflective consciousness. In this nearly thousand-year-old building, we tune in to a spiritual force-field that stirs the deeper levels of our psyche.

This originally "pagan" temple has gained its specific character as a Christian place of worship through the symbols that the Christian liturgy has brought into it. The ritual room sanctified a natural religion, given a Christian accent by the introduction of a new liturgy and new symbols. The barrelled vault with the drawings of Christ in the stave church at Hol represents the new plane of consciousness and the beam constructions behind it the forces of life and the depths of the soul.

The Basilica

Another example of how the architectonic structure of a church can be an allegory for processes of consciousness is the interior of Stavanger Cathedral. The



Stavanger cathedral.

construction is a base of little-differentiated masonry that gradually becomes more articulated and refined in association with window openings, columns and the vault in the Romanesque nave, while the Gothic chancel has a high degree of formal precision with detailed articulation of all of the architectonic elements.

The Romanesque columns in the main nave have a fertile feminine corporeality and sensibility while the Gothic conical vault in the chancel has an ascetic character. Lush wood carvings on the pulpit and altar pieces from later periods contrast vitally and gaily with the timeless monumentality of the stone architecture.

The room reflects a technological and historically stylized development towards ever higher levels of quality. The increase in awareness that took place during the building and expansion of the church may be considered as a parallel to the universal development of awareness.

The church house's vertical section from fundament to loft documents a progressive differentiation from the casually archaic to the deliberately structural, with special decorative consideration given to the masonry mass where the light is admitted, and the weight is distributed among the freestanding columns.

Architecture finds its most beautiful forms of articulation in the theoretically most demanding constructional situations. The constructively optimal figure in stone, emphasized by the figurative language of architecture, becomes an allegory for the powers and versatility in our own selves. This occurs independently of the sacred functions of the room, while at the same time serving them.



Example of a stave church.

The Chapel and the Artist

In the simple white chapel in Vence, the aged Matisse in his wheelchair composed three large fields of glass with petals of gold, green and blue. With simple black strokes he painted "The Crossroads" on the white wall tiles. At the outset it appears to be an almost irreverent, embellishment—a natural adoration channeled through an artist's mind and temperament—where one stands as it were inside the actual artistry, signed by Matisse. The altar, the cross and the eternal lamp tell us that this is a Catholic chapel, but it is Matisse who, perhaps more starkly than in his paintings, takes us by the hand and leads us into a room that becomes holy for us, not through the Christian message, but through artistic quality.

General Validity

The four examples—the Pantheon, the stave church, the cathedral and the chapel in Vence—illustrate how different sacred rooms, reserved for religious ceremony, function in a psychologically meaningful way regardless of time, place, culture, nationality, construction, technology and liturgy.

The art and architectural historian can document common configurative elements in sacred buildings and rooms, regardless of the style and profession. C.G. Jung challenges the modern being to break out of the clichés of conventional interpretation and become aware of the existential insight found in the traditions of all cultures and religions. This is an especially challenging professional imperative for clergy and architects. □

THEOLOGY AND DESIGN THEORY

An IFRAA Conference Report on the New World Headquarters of the RLDS

By Michael J. Crosbie, AIA



IFRAA's Conference in mid-March in Independence, Missouri, addressed the theme, "Theology and Design Theory," featuring an in-depth tour of the new World Headquarters of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (RLDS). The new temple was designed by Gyo Obata, FAIA, of Hellmuth Obata & Kassabaum, St. Louis, and incorporates the work of several artists. Obata made a presentation at the conference, focusing on how the temple expresses the theology of RLDS and how it projects itself to the world at large. Bishop W.B. "Pat" Spillman led participants on the tour of the building.

Touring the Temple

The \$37.5 million building is sited on a knoll in a turn-of-the-century area, which since 1920 has served as the group's headquarters. The site was designated by founder Joseph Smith Jr. in 1831 as the spot where a temple should one day be built. HOK was chosen as architect in 1988, construction began in 1990 and the building was dedicated in 1994.

Conceptually, the building is actually two structures: a low-rise administration/education wing adjoining the spiraling temple, which reaches 300 feet on the Independence skyline. The tour started at the virtual juncture of these two—in a small lobby that surrounds a Japanese garden—a gift to the church from Japan's RLDS congregation. The small garden, contained in a courtyard space, becomes a visual focal point in the circulation system around the administration/education wing of the temple and helps to orient you.

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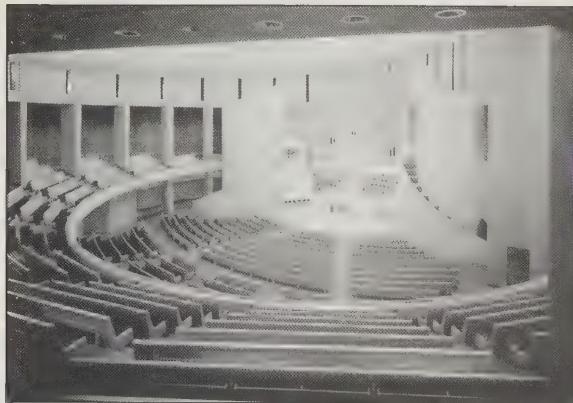
Temple of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

From here the tour proceeded to the octagonal Meditation Chapel, which seats 40 to 50 people. Its walls of pink (a predominant color throughout the complex), gray/pink carpet and octagonal skylight give this space an ethereal quality. The indirect lighting from the clerestory windows above reinforces the airy atmosphere.

On the walls are large oil paintings, nine feet tall by eight feet wide, of the eight "ordinances" or sacraments of RLDS. Compared to the abstract quality of the space, the paintings are in sharp contrast. They were painted by Jack Garnier who is an RLDS member and on the art committee. The paintings are highly realistic, depicting the respective ordinance ceremonies. To communicate

the universal nature of the faith each ordinance is depicted in a different global setting.

Immediately outside the chapel is a curved granite wall that defines the chapel entrance. On this wall hangs one of the many commissioned art pieces: a wooden cross by sculptor David Martin, also a member of the congregation. The cross is an assemblage of 110 varieties of wood, gathered from 38 countries around the world. It has over 300 individual pieces and at its center is a three-finger olive branch, which from a distance suggests the form of a dove. This symbolism reflects RLDS's mission of world peace. Martin also designed the large cross that hangs prominently on the east wall of the temple. Of similar design it is made



Interior views of the RLDS Temple: sanctuary (left) and section of Worshippers Path (right).

of stainless steel and measures 30 feet high by 18 feet wide.

Theology and Form

The theological concept for the design of the temple reflects the symbolism of the human spirit spiraling toward heaven from earth, and divine inspiration spiraling down to humanity from heaven. Both of these spirals meet in the temple. Thus, the procession to the sanctuary begins at a glass-framed portal and continues up a spiral "Worshippers Path."

The glass portal was designed by artist Kathy Barnard of Kansas City. The six etched glass panels surrounding the portal depict the Sacred Grove in upstate New York, where Joseph Smith Jr. had one of his first religious experiences. Barnard's portal is quite realistic in its portrayal of a woods, with finely detailed depiction of flora and fauna—even small insects are rendered. Here, the art "symbolizes the worshipers' search for encounter with the Divine," according to an RLDS publication.

Once through the portal, the path rises to meet you as you begin the spiral journey to the sanctuary. The trip starts in subdued light, which becomes progressively brighter as one moves closer to the sanctuary, 14 feet above the entry level. This movement has a sense of mystery as the final destination is always concealed, just around the curve. To the right, the path is defined by a rugged, split-faced granite block wall, with light cascading down the wall from a reveal at the wall/ceiling juncture. As the path curves to the left, the opposite wall reveals art pieces that are calculated to prepare one for the spiritual experience.

The first piece, "Once Was Lost...Now Is Found," etched into wall panels of

black granite, depicts the prodigal son returning to his father. This piece, also by Barnard, is highly polished so that one can see one's reflection. A little farther along the ramp, one comes to the "Shadow of the Cross," a rough-hewn cross back-lighted so that the shadow falls across the Worshippers Path, symbolizing your movement along the "Way of the Cross." The next piece is a Japanese "Ikebana" flower arrangement, symbolizing the elements of heaven, humankind and earth brought together in harmonious relationship. The ramp ends at an elegant gray and black granite fountain, with a placid pool of water that sheets down and into a trough. Meant to symbolize the overflowing love of God, the fountain is overarched with the words: "Whoever draws of the water that I shall give will never thirst." John 4:13.

A Spiral of Light

At the fountain, one moves to the left and into the sanctuary itself. The low and dimly lit Worshippers Path is the perfect foil for this incredible, light-filled space. The volume is curled in a spiral, with seating for 1,600 arcing round. The most amazing part is the ceiling, which spirals nearly 200 feet above the floor, seemingly into infinity. It is rendered in white-painted gypsum board and plaster, rolled into a generous coil. There are clerestory windows along the spiral, which bring in natural light. The ample form of the ceiling and the natural illumination result in a sculptural surface, with varying intensities of light from bright to dark, which reinforce the image of the ceiling as organic and moving, like a great cloud rising into the heavens. A series of down-lights along the spiral appear as a constellation of stars.

The sanctuary space is focused on a large stage called the centrum. Behind it is a huge, 102-rank pipe organ, designed specifically for the space and built by the Canadian firm Casavant Frères. On either side of the centrum are large, tall, spiral forms that house preparation rooms for worship services. These forms help modulate the sanctuary's acoustics. The tour participants were treated to a short organ recital that demonstrated the magnitude of the 5,685-pipe instrument and the acoustics of the space.

After the performance, acoustician R. Lawrence Kirkegaard, who was consulted on the design, briefly discussed the acoustics of the sanctuary. According to Kirkegaard, the curved geometry of the space is strong, "and we wanted to avoid creating acoustical hot-spots on which sound was focused." The space was modeled and tested for acoustical performance. Kirkegaard pointed out that the interior wall finishes comprise as many as four layers of drywall and plaster. Underneath the balcony seating, along the back wall, is a series of audio/video control rooms with glass walls that are tilted forward so that sound is reflected back into the pews.

For sound amplification, there are small speakers placed intermittently on the backs of the pews, and there are also small speakers under the seats. The only carpeted areas are the aisles, and the carpeting is purposely low pile so as not to absorb too much sound. The sanctuary is shielded from mechanical system noise by having equipment remotely located and dampered down.

All of the sanctuary woodwork is bleached maple, which dovetails with the light color scheme throughout the space. The light is very even, and all the colors

are shades of off-white. This sanctuary is used for periodic worship services (many of which are transmitted by satellite to hundreds of congregations throughout North America) including a brief daily "prayer for peace," and other artistic events such as organ and orchestra concerts. Baptisms, weddings and funeral services are not conducted at the temple.

The sanctuary is designed to be exited through doors to the rear of the space. A hallway delivers one to the glazed entry to a large stair hall, over which appear these words from John 4:37: "Lift up your eyes and look on the fields; for they are white all ready to harvest." The exit stair hall is dominated by a 50-foot-tall stained glass window designed and fabricated by New York artisan David Wilson. The window depicts rice and wheat—staples that are universal to Western and Eastern cultures. The panels are bright with yellow, green and white stained glass meant to inspire the departing worshiper.

From here, one can exit the building down the stairs or through two large bronze doors to the World Plaza, a large outdoor space paved with a brick pattern in the shape of the world map. Again, the design of the World Plaza reinforces universality and the bronze doors bear the church's symbol—a child standing between a lion and a lamb. The bronze piece for the doors was designed by Jack Garnier.

The Design Process

Following the tour, Gyo Obata, FAIA, gave a presentation on the design of the temple, discussing how the leadership of the church clearly articulated a number of design goals that should be incorporated in the headquarters building:

- The temple should have a sense of mystery and awe of the divine.
- The design should express the balance between the emotional and the intellectual.
- It should provide constructive coexistence of divine interpretation of faith, symbolizing various concepts difficult to express in words.
- It should reflect the international personality of the church, as people from all nations will visit the temple and should feel comfortable there.
- It should not recall the architecture of other churches but should be non-traditional and universal.
- The temple and the grounds should be an integrated whole.
- Qualities that should be thought of

are peace and reconciliation; light, revelation and wisdom; wholeness of mind, body and spirit; faith; and cleansing.

From these goals a number of program requirements developed:

- The Reception Hall for greeting and journey preparation.
- The Worshiper's Path to prepare one by a transition from the mundane and secular to the spiritual and sacred using texture, color, light, form and sound.
- Sanctuary space for approximately 1,800 worshipers.
- An exit different than the entry through the Worshiper's Path, designed to reinforce a commitment to service.

The first and strongest design idea grew out of an investigation of natural forms, Obata explained, using Dark Thompson's book, *On Growth and Form*, an inspiration. The shell of the chambered nautilus became a model to work from. "There is no simpler law of growth," he said, "that widens and lengthens in the same proportion." He produced some sketches showing the evolution of the design concept, and three initial ideas to the Temple Architecture and Art Committee. Committee members immediately reacted to the spiral form. "They fell in love with that idea," Obata noted, "and we were instructed to develop it."

Further study was done on computer, projecting the building in plan, section, elevation and perspective. "We couldn't have done this building without the computer," said Obata. The radiating plan of the temple became the focal point of the entire site, with walkways extending out from the building in a radial pattern through the parking lot. This would allow visitors to begin to experience the building's form as they approach from the lot, which further facilitates preparation for the worship experience.

Acoustical performance was carefully considered. "We looked at lots of shapes and must have made hundreds of models," Obata said, referring to the design of the two large, cylindrical forms on either side of the centrum.

The building's shape was a challenge to construct. At first, concrete was considered because of the soft, curved surfaces, but it was determined that the building could be more easily rendered with a steel structure. Once again the computer became the essential tool, allowing every steel member to be modeled, sized and laid out. The building structure contains 1,500 tons of steel.



Gyo Obata, FAIA, Temple architect.

Panel Discussion

After his presentation, Obata was joined in a panel discussion by Alan D. Tyree, a retired RLDS minister who chaired the Temple Architecture and Art Committee, and artists Kathy Barnard and David Martin, with Pat Spillman as moderator. Tyree was quite forthcoming about the architect selection process, which took approximately two years.

"IFRAA played a very important part in the selection," Tyree said. "Working with IFRAA and attending numerous events introduced us to a range of liturgical consultants who provided valuable guidance in conceiving design goals and finding the right architect. For example, the idea of the Worshiper's Path came from our discussions with consultants. There was also much consideration about artwork—how it would function to enhance the worship experience, whether it should be representational or abstract, appropriate subject matter, etc., before the selection of the architect."

Tyree said the selection process was thorough with the compilation of a list of about 30 firms. A questionnaire eliminated about half. The interview process then was extensive with information about the program and faith made available to the architects and firm offices visited. Buildings completed by the designers were studied. "We narrowed the list to three firms," Tyree said, "which the committee recommended to the RLDS president. The three were then vis-

(Continued on page 29)

IN THE PRESENCE OF GREATNESS

Swietego Ducha Church, Tychy, Poland

By A. Richard Williams, FAIA



A true measure of greatness in art and architecture is its power to be deeply felt by all who come in its presence. Of all the churches visited by our IFRAA Tour Group to East Germany and Poland last October the Swietego Ducha Church in Tychy, Poland, by architect Stanislaw Niemczyk, was by acclamation our choice for top honors. An awareness dawned that beyond the limited scope of comparison, it found its place at global scale in the company of such masterpieces as Corbusier's Notre Dame de Ronchamp and Fay Jones's Thorncrown Chapel—another milestone of excellence in this pantheon of modern architecture. One realized again that crossing this threshold is so rare that when it happens it is hard to explain, made more difficult because there is such diversity in the best we know.

At the IFRAA Biennial Conference in New York, architect William Conklin lamented the "ill-at-ease" relationship of the religious mind and the artistic mind, the narrowness of definition of sacred spaces as blocks to an exalting spiritual experience in so many contemporary churches. He said we were more likely to find a religious experience elsewhere; for example, in the best of art museums. But at Tychy, an extraordinary level of spiritual experience was unmistakable. What might account for its success while others fail?

One observation is that Tychy achieves its inspiring sense of presence because it is both timeless and timely. Timeless in



Swietego Ducha Church, Tychy, Poland, exterior facing East.

its reflection of regional character—its sky silhouette of a low-pitched pyramidal roof topped by slender Byzantine-like spires and in the ambiance of its mystical dark interior. We responded as well to the timeless sense of welcoming approach under the eaves from all sides. The external ambulatory gathers the flock from the fields still open on the east and south and from the city on the north. The convent on the west is a further symbol of hospitality and welcome.

This invitation of gathering around the focus of worship is fulfilled by the spatial organization of the interior, almost as a theater in the round, by its pyramidal form made asymmetrical enough so that the sanctuary is not an island in the center but the altar area remains as a focus under the pyramid peak.

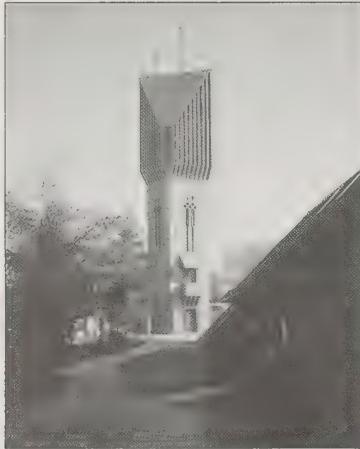
The low profile of the roof edges and details of openings maintains a consistent human scale, avoiding monumentality. No doubt a large part of Tychy's

humanistic appeal is enhanced by an almost Venetian romanticism of textural



Detail of finials.

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Bell tower.



Sanctuary painting.

Photos A. Richard Williams

richness in concentrated areas; for instance, where the roof silhouettes against the sky, the freestanding bell tower and the interior focusing of colorful iconography on a natural wood background. There is a certain added attraction, an aura of strangeness of the kind found in far corners of the world like Katmandu. Tychy's low-keyed exuberance of art and architectural collaboration, together with its harmony of limited materials, is in contrast to so many modern churches in which the egocentric personalities of artists and architects clash. In Poland as well as all over the world, it is rare to find a work so free of fashionable clichés and signature styling.

Time itself is a key design force and dimension. It allows for deeper study, refinement and investment of meaning. Tychy reflects the advantage of a long timespan process. Again and again, we were told by clergy and participants of the long frustrating delays in obtaining building permits from communist authorities and of difficulty in finding materials and construction equipment once permits were acquired. Not in short supply, however, was the eagerness of volunteer labor and dedication of the clergy, architects, artists and craftsmen over long time-spans, reminiscent of the Middle Ages. Construction finally began at Tychy in 1979 with substantial completion in 1983. In the face of Poland's historic, social, political and economic hardships particularly in this century, such wealth of response seems paradoxical.

The Tychy church is a timely success, too, as judged by our evermore exacting modern criteria of excellence—functional, aesthetic, social, economic, tech-

nical, environmental and contextual qualities in the total equation of critical judgment. But still today in many elitist quarters, as in the past, preoccupation with style and other superficial attributes of looks over substance still persists.

As afternoon visitors at Tychy we could not participate in the liturgy, but for each of us the brief opportunity for meditation was most rewarding. In an informal way, the spirit of the place was deeply felt through the hospitality of the pastor, Fr. Franciszek R. Resiak, the architect Niemezyk, his daughter and son-in-law (our interpreter) and the sisters of the convent who hosted a most pleasant coffee hour.

The design of time lies at the heart of human performances and rituals just as it does for the settings that accommodate them. The quality of each is inseparable from the other, becoming a single work of art with time as a dimension. Stars are awarded by the Guide Michelin for ensemble excellence, not for either performance or setting separately. For instance, full enjoyment of the Semper Ope in Dresden depends on superb architecture and musical performance as a single interwoven experience. One might contemplate that the quality of the spiritual experience in sacred spaces depends not only on the harmony of the art and architecture but on the ritual performance and the individual worshipper.

Even deeper in the design process is the search for the "existence will" of a project. Martin Buber speaks of the idea of an "in between realm" in the I and Thou relationship that gains its own strength and identify through mutuality.

Louis Kahn spoke of what a project wants to be on its own terms. Such a theory demands a new order of humility and a greater investment of time and patience. All are necessary to evoke the desired essence, identity and beauty of "what wants to be in its own right."

Musing further on Conklin's projection of the museum as spiritual space:

If I were asked to give examples of museums that have achieved "existence will," Kahn's Kimball Museum in Fort Worth; Richard Meier's Kunsthandwerk Museum in Frankfort and James Sterling's Statsgallerie in Stuttgart would be strong contenders. The top quality of the collections, the curatorial expertise, and the precision craftsmanship match the talent of the architects, resulting not only in ensemble excellence but a moving spiritual experience as well. Tychy's achievement is of the same high standard, an example of sacred space in today's world of fast-track superficiality.

Tychy and other great works of modern architecture, rare as they are, redefine by their very existence a true canon of excellence in diversity, both timeless and timely. Whatever depth of analysis one might attempt—to shed light on the separate ingredients of canonicity that bridge past to present pinnacles in art and architecture—the quest remains elusive, just as the notion that "beauty is more than skin deep" is hard to pin down. But when it's all there, as at Tychy you know it and rejoice."

Editor's note: We have just received word the architect Stanislaw Niemezyk has been awarded the annual Honourable Award of the Association of Polish Architects (SARP) for 1996 for the Nowe Tychy Church in Krakow.

MOVING FORWARD

By Frank Orr, AIA



After receiving the following letter from Frank Orr, Orr/Houk and Associates, Architects Inc., Nashville, Tennessee, Faith & Form invited Mr. Orr to write an article emphasizing the statements made in his letter.

Dear Editor:

Not long after I began practice close to 25 years ago, I joined IFRAA. I did this because I was becoming more and more involved with religious architecture, and I hoped this organization would be of some help. I soon realized that the dominating focus of the organization was on the liturgical faiths and their expressions in art and architecture. Because my market was definitely in the evangelical area, I eventually decided to drop my membership.

Now, because the AIA has given its members the opportunity to join a Professional Interest Area (PIA), I find I am "back in the fold" with IFRAA. It is clear that the focus is still on the liturgical, appearing to totally ignore the evangelical churches and their aspirations, values and needs. At least that is my perception.

I believe that IFRAA is doing the profession itself and the entire religious community a disservice by this omission. To ignore a segment of the Christian family in the United States that to all appearances is the fastest growing and most active in building is, it seems to me, foolishly wrongheaded. Agreed, much of this building may be bad architecture, but is not that reason enough for IFRAA to consider part of its mission to try to improve architecture for these groups? It seems to me that by focusing so exclusively on the liturgical realm, IFRAA has missed a great paradigm shift in the Christian world.

None of what I have said is intended

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First Baptist Church, Hendersonville, Tennessee, Orr/Houk & Associates Architects won the Merit Award from the Baptist S.S. Board and was featured in Metal Architecture magazine.



First Baptist Church, Athens, Alabama, Orr/Houk & Associates Architects.



to denigrate the quality of the architecture of the individual projects recently featured in *Faith & Form*. What I do intend to point out is that there is much architecture of equal or better quality being designed and built for the evangelical part of the Christian community, and that IFRAA could and should be cognizant of that work and become involved in helping to improve it in the future.

Cordially,
Frank Orr

In recent years the majority of church building in the South, and perhaps in other regions as well, has been for evangelical denominations. These denominations share certain traits and practices, which may be unfamiliar to those living outside this region.

Some of these characteristics include:

- The "Priesthood of the Believer," meaning that each Christian has direct spiritual access to God with direct responsibility and accountability to Him without the intercession of any other human being
- Church membership is limited to baptized believers in Jesus Christ who bear witness to an earlier spiritual acceptance of salvation.
- Baptism by immersion, practiced in full public view, is a celebration and a testimony.
- The Lord's Supper (Communion) is practiced as a "remembrance," with no saving power of its own, and practiced by the passing of the elements (bread and wine) to the congregants in their seats, so that the "taking" of the elements can be done simultaneously by all persons.
- Strong emphasis on Bible-centered, expository and evangelical preaching.
- Strong emphasis on music, in an unlimited array of forms, congregational as well as by specialists
- Democratic church governance pat-

terns; no denominational hierarchy; each local congregation is autonomous.

- Strong emphasis on family, which sometimes finds expression in a recreational facility (Family Life Center).

Because of these considerations, standard practices of worship and ministries have evolved through the years and have become translated into standard design patterns for architects, as well as for the clergy and their congregations. As architects we must encourage people to look at needs and issues with new and dynamic expectations. Because past responses have congealed into formulas and answers into dogma, this is difficult.

Naturally, this attitude has found expression in evangelical architecture. The concern for order, formality and dignity has resulted in a lock-step conformance to symmetry. Since "The Word" (preaching) is central to worship the pulpit should always be in the physical center. It follows then that all other elements in the worship space—the communion table, the choir and baptistry (pool)—should also be located along the central axis. This arrangement worked well for

many years and found little opposition, but recently some denominational leaders have realized that it causes some problems.

The most serious is with the baptistry. This is not only because of its importance in the life of the church, but because it is large, requiring lots of room for "backstage" support spaces and access. The symbolic significance of the baptistry has begun to be fully appreciated. When it is located on the centerline of a rigidly symmetrical room, it has to be behind the choir. Since the choir is almost always elevated on tiers, the baptistry then has to be raised even higher. The result is that it is distanced from the congregation not only horizontally but vertically, making it more remote, and the needed bonding of the new congregant with the family of faith is more difficult. The old arrangement had the effect of making the service a voyeur-like experience through a sort of window in the rear wall of a room. The positive recent trend is to construct the baptistry so that it appears to be located in the main space.

We have tried to lead our clients to consider moving the baptistry off center and to lower it, so that the described problems above are eliminated and intimacy between the church family and new believer is enhanced. In addition, if the choir is moved off-center to the opposite side, the choir members can then participate directly as observers like the congregation.

We have also tried to show new direction in the depiction of the cross. Most evangelicals have always held that the cross should be empty, emphasizing the risen Christ. We have suggested that since Jesus did overcome the cross, perhaps it should appropriately be shown as a void. We have suggested that an indirect light around the perimeter of the void would express the "light of the world" as overcoming the cross. The cross does recall one of the most evil acts in history, and a possibly more theologically appropriate way of depicting it would be as a rough, distorted and even revolting object.

These are but two of the problems we have addressed, but there are many more that will arise in the future. We are dedicated to being true to the foundational tenets of the evangelical faith but view this kind of inquiring attitude and integrity of design as what the process of making architecture is all about. □



First Christian Church, Glasgow, Kentucky, designed by the late Nashville architect Edwin A. Keeble and built in the mid-1960s.

ANCIENT ALTARS, PENTECOSTAL FIRE

By Paul Thigpen



The ministers are dressed in embroidered robes, walking with a cross amid the smoke of incense in a procession down the church aisle. And they're speaking in tongues.

For decades now, the charismatic movement has been influencing the forms of worship practiced in many of the older historic churches. Millions of Catholics, Episcopalians, Lutherans and others worldwide have found that the informal, spontaneous and exuberant worship style of charismatics can bring new warmth and energy to traditional services—services whose formal structures and restrained atmosphere once felt cold and routine to them.

Today, more churches than ever are likely to be bridging the gap between ancient forms and Pentecostal fervor. But surprisingly enough, many of them are now building the bridge from the other direction.

Across the country, groups of nondenominational charismatic believers seeking to deepen and enrich their worship are exploring the traditional forms of the oldest Christian communions. They're finding that what is often called "liturgical worship" has a balance, breadth and rootedness often lacking in more spontaneous forms. They're learning that liturgy was a part of the worship of the New Testament church. And they're discovering that the Holy Spirit is not afraid of structure—that liturgical forms can be filled with Pentecostal power to provide the environment for a rich and dynamic encounter with God.

The New Liturgical Charismatics

Some charismatic churches are merely borrowing (or as they would call it, reclaiming) an eclectic assortment of ele-

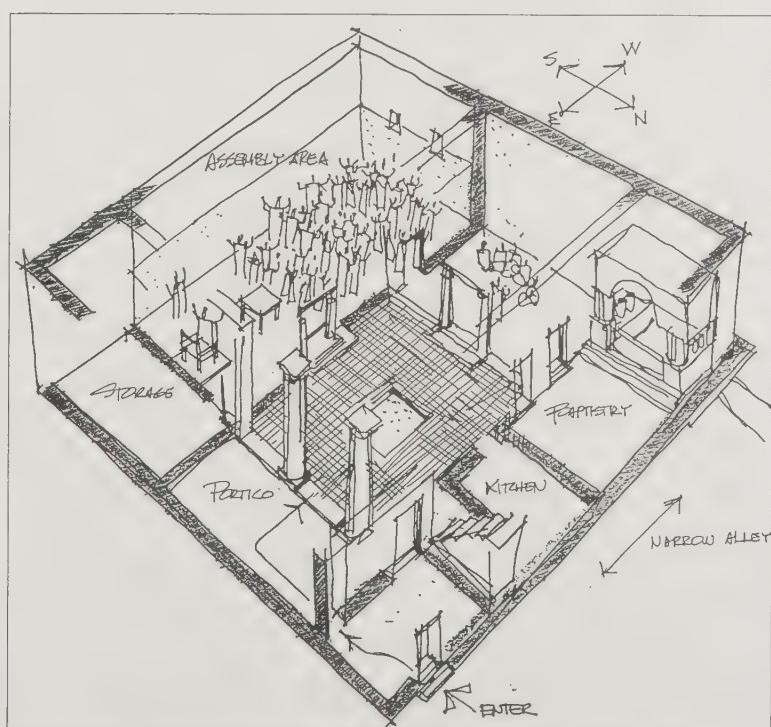
ments from the liturgies of the Anglican, Catholic and Orthodox churches: a weekly Eucharist (the Lord's Supper), clerical vestments, litanies, incense, processions, fixed prayers and creeds. Others have decided to embrace the formal approach to services as a whole, adopting the entire order of worship or even joining—an entire congregation or denomination at a time—with a historic body like the worldwide Anglican communion or the Orthodox churches of the East.

The best-known evangelical advocate for recovering the power of liturgy is Robert Webber, a professor of theology at Wheaton College in Illinois who journeyed from a fundamentalist Baptist

upbringing to the Episcopal Church. In his most recent book, *Signs of Wonder: The Phenomenon of Convergence in Modern Liturgical and Charismatic Churches* (Star Song, 1992), Webber insists: "I believe what is happening worldwide in worship is a convergence of the traditions...resulting in the birth of a style of worship that is rooted in Scripture, aware of the developments in history, and with a passion for the contemporary."

Not surprisingly, Christians who move to a more liturgical setting are often viewed with suspicion by their fellow believers who aren't moving in the same direction. Sometimes the apprehension is simply based on ignorance.

More common, however, are the



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Illustrations Charles Pohlmann (deceased)

thoughtful objections that merit a serious response. They question whether liturgy is biblical or merely a "tradition of men," and they fear that so much structure leaves little room for the Holy Spirit to operate.

What Is Liturgy?

The English word "liturgy" comes from the Greek *leitourgia*, which originally meant "work of the people." In the New Testament, *liturgy* refers to a public function in which service is rendered—in secular settings, a service to the state; in the Bible, a service to God.

In this general sense, all churches have a liturgy in their worship, a particular approach to the public meetings in which they seek to serve God. Even churches that emphasize spontaneity and novelty fall into a more-or-less standard order of service. They may not intend to establish a liturgy, but regular forms develop all the same. The issue then is not whether they will have a liturgy; all churches do. The issue is: What liturgy will they use? On what pattern will they base their services?

Charismatic Discontent

In this light, then, to speak of charismatics rediscovering liturgy may be misleading. We might more accurately say that some are realizing that the liturgy they have is lacking. For some, discontent grew with the weariness of making every service unique. As habits and routines developed despite their best intentions, these churches found they could easily slip into empty ritual. Others came to realize that their services were more "minister centered" than "God centered." Liturgical forms tended to focus attention on the worship leader, band, special vocalists, or healing minister. They often seemed entertainment driven.

For still others, motivation for change was a deep sense—often more felt than understood—that the Lord's Supper needed to be recognized as a source of spiritual life and health. Through study they learned that from ancient times the Eucharist has been held as the climax of the service when worshipers encounter Jesus in a unique way, and they experienced that reality for themselves.

But Is It Biblical?

Charismatic teaching assumes that worship in the New Testament church was informal and spontaneous. This view is drawn from two sorts of biblical pas-

sages. Those that denounce pagan legalism, ungodly traditions and hypocrisy, or those that suggest the meetings were highly participatory and allowed for spontaneous operation of spiritual gifts. From this perspective, formal, carefully structured forms are viewed as corruption or regression.

Therefore, many charismatics have been startled to discover historical evidence that New Testament worship included formal liturgy. Patterns of Old Testament worship were highly structured, and we know that in Jesus' day many of these forms remained the norm. Temple, synagogue and home had fixed prayers, litanies, chanted psalms and ritual actions, and Jesus and the apostles took part in them.

After Pentecost, the first Christians quite naturally incorporated liturgical structures of the synagogue and temple into their worship, and Paul spoke of Christians singing the Psalms, a practice borrowed from the synagogue. New Testament descriptions of Jesus' last supper with his disciples fit what we know of the general structure of Jewish liturgy around the table. Most striking of all is John's description in Revelations of heaven's worship. He paints a picture of elders in special garments, chanting fixed prayers before an altar with incense and burning lamps.

Why Use Traditional Liturgy?

For those charismatics who insist that we must imitate the New Testament church as closely as possible, the knowledge that the first Christians worshipped with set rituals is sufficient motivation for adopting liturgical forms. But even those who believe Christians aren't bound to imitate the early church in all things have found that many ancient traditions of worship enrich their congregational life. Intentionally liturgical charismatics have often cited these benefits:

- Traditional liturgy can help us center our worship on God rather than the ministers.
- Traditional liturgy teaches congregations to view worship as a discipline and privilege rather than entertainment.
- Traditional liturgy contributes to the maturity of our teaching and understanding of the Christian faith.
- Traditional liturgical forms encourage the unity of faith.
- Traditional liturgical forms have a carefully cultivated beauty of language, color and movement that makes our wor-

ship more fitting for our beautiful Savior.

• Traditional liturgies connect us to Christians in other churches and in earlier generations.

• Restoring the Eucharist to its ancient position of prominence in worship allows us to experience its mystery more deeply.

• Most importantly, ancient liturgical forms can benefit us because some aspects of life in the Spirit are best communicated and experienced through concrete, visual and acted symbols rather than through words.

Though so-called Liberalism and Fundamentalism appear to be in opposition in the 20th century, they are merely mirror images of the same rationalist system that seeks to reduce both God and humanity to manageable proportions. The result: Both liberals and fundamentalists typically disdain mystery and deny the role of the supernatural in human affairs.

In an important sense, then, the Pentecostal and charismatic movements came as a reversal of this deadly rationalizing tendency in the modern church. Holy Spirit baptism, leading to experience of nonrational tongues and unexplainable miracles, reintroduced Christians to the mystery of God and His exaltation over our puny understanding. In addition, the Pentecostals and their heirs recaptured the truth that the human being is body and emotions, as well as intellect. They testified that God was interested in physical and emotional healing, and that worship involved not just our minds, but also our emotions and bodies. Furthermore, charismatics found out that God could work mightily through the spoken word and the laying on of hands, the anointing oil and the prayer cloth—that is, they rediscovered the sacramental nature of the Christian life.

Little wonder, then, that many nondenominational charismatics have begun putting down roots in the traditions of the church. They've been nourished by its sacramental realities all along, though few probably realized it until now.

The danger, of course, is that the new liturgical charismatics may replace the power of Pentecost with formal structures of worship, rather than synthesizing the two. □

This article, which appeared in Ministries Today, is reprinted with permission and has been edited due to space restrictions.

Books

By Betty H. Meyer, Editor

Women in Architecture: A Contemporary Perspective. Clare Loring. Rizzoli International Publications, 300 Park Ave. South, New York, NY 10010, (212) 759-2424. Paper. \$29.95.

This is a celebratory book by an English author who presents the work of 48 contemporary women architects from 20 countries. She includes work in which a woman has led the design team, been an equal partner or a sole practitioner. Each is highly regarded in her own country, which is the basis for inclusion in the book.

Two or more pages are given to each individual and include a biography, photographs of work and the cultural, economic and climatic context of the country in which she works. U.S.A. architects included are Diana Agrest, Denise Scott Brown, Kate Diamond, Merrill Elam, Frances Halsband, Diane Legge, Elizabeth Plater-Zybeck, Margot Siegel, Laurinda Spear, Jane Thompson, Susana Torre, Anne Griswold Tyng, Beverly Willis.

* * *

Liturgy and the Arts. Albert Rouet. The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN, (800) 858-5450. Paper. \$19.95.

Bishop Albert Rouet of France believes passionately in the need for dialogue and cooperation between artists and the Christian communities, and that the arts are indispensable for the incarnation of faith if we are to cooperate with God in bringing about a new creation of His kingdom. Though beauty may be a relief from the heaviness of daily routine, the role of the artist is to disclose holiness. If art and liturgy will join forces their rapprochement will be transcendence.

The book is a compilation of papers Bishop Rouet has given at various congresses on how the collaboration can be achieved.

* * *

Architectural Painting. Lawrence Gow. Rizzoli International Publications, 300 Park Ave. South, New York, NY 10010, (212) 759-2424. Hardcover. 190 pp. with

selected list of U.S. architectural painters and 300 illustrations.

The interest in preserving and restoring old buildings, along with the style of Post-Modernism, has revived an interest in the art of the decorative painter. In the 1970s, the painting of building facades in carefully researched, historical colors led to a re-learning of stenciling, graining, marbleizing, gilding, glazing, murals, trompe l'oeil, etc. This book presents the work of 20 artists, who transform the essential elements of architecture with skill and imagination.

Specialized Books of Interest

English Stone Building. Alec Clifton-Taylor and A.S. Treson. Trafalgar Square Publishers, North Pomfret, VT 05053. Paper. \$35.

Answering the interest in stone building, this book gives a brief history of the early use of stone followed by ten chapters on masonry, mortars and pointing, roofing and decorative use of stone. The last chapter deals with stonework today.

* * *

Stories in Stone. Martial Rose and Julia Hedgecoe. Thames and Hudson, 500 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10110, (212) 354-3763. Paper. \$19.95.

Have you stood in European cathedrals and looked up into the vaulting to see numerous painted keystones that were impossible to identify or see clearly? Up until recently these images have been inaccessible but modern technology has made it possible to photograph them in all their glory. In Norwich cathedral there are over 1,000 of these keystones from 1300-1515, which are linked together in storytelling patterns between eight and 24 inches wide. They reflect a variety of pagan, Christian and folk subjects. Those in Norwich are unparalleled in the medieval world. With one author an exceptional historian and the other a distinguished photographer, this book is a treasure. □

Theology and Design

(continued from page 22)

ited once again and the decision was made to go with HOK. And it's been OK ever since."

In response to an audience question about the most surprising part of the process, Tyree commented that it was Obata's unique design. "It responded very well to our expectations. We gave him a major burden: to design a universal building. We wanted something non-traditional, non-American, something that people from Third World countries could feel comfortable with. The shell concept is this. It's an ideal representation and fits with our theological concept of two minds—that of man and that of the Divine coming together. This design was a pleasant surprise."

Pat Spillman observed that the design was adopted not only by the Building Committee but also by the congregation. Church leaders received the design with enthusiasm but they were gratified at the overwhelming positive response of the congregation.

Tyree also discussed the budget, which he said was fixed to the church's fundraising efforts. Contracts were used that would keep the budget cost within the means of the church, and a contingency was built into the budget to compensate for underestimates and unforeseen circumstances. He said that the project was completed within the budget.

David Martin and Kathy Barnard discussed the artist's role in the project. Barnard was brought into the process in 1989 to create the gateway to the Worshiper's Path. The content of the piece had been determined by the Temple Committee. Martin commented that his time working on the interior wooden cross was donated, as were several others. To a question about the criteria used to select artists, it was stressed that religious affiliation was not an issue, that they were looking for people who captured the spirit of what they were creating.

A video on the design and construction of the Temple was shown to participants and is available to IFRAA members. As a wrap-up for the weekend, conference participants were invited to an informal session back at the hotel where there was a wide-ranging discussion about the nature of religious architecture and art, and how the conferees' own experiences compared with all they had seen and heard. □

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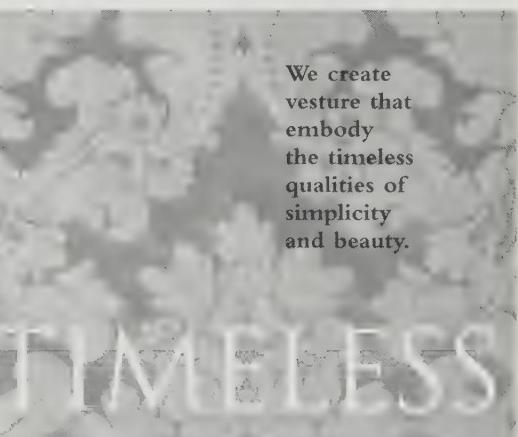
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